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DEPARTMENT OF ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL AFFAIRS  
STATISTICS DIVISION

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**Report on the survey of national classification practices and assessment  
of ISIC and CPC implementation**

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## 1. Introduction

The Classifications website of the United Nations Statistics Division (UNSD) includes a section titled “National classifications” that provides information about individual classifications implemented in countries around the world. This listing of national classifications was first published after an initial survey in 1998 and focused on activity and product classifications at the time.

Subsequently, information was updated through a questionnaire, typically distributed in connection with UNSD classifications workshops. Overall, a relatively good coverage was obtained, although information related to different points in time.

At its meeting in 2011, the Expert Group reviewed an updated template for assessing the implementation of national classifications (see document ESA/STAT/AC.234/11). In the follow-up to the meeting, additional modifications to this template were made and the final version was used in a world wide survey in the summer/fall of 2012. The questionnaire used in the survey is shown in Annex 1.

## 2. Summary of the 2012 survey

In this latest survey, information was sought on activity classifications, product classifications, expenditure classifications and occupation classifications. Countries were also invited to submit information on any other classification they deemed of interest. The responses therefore also include information on education classifications for a number of countries.

The questionnaire was initially sent out in English, but versions in the other official languages of the United Nations were provided as a follow-up.

As of 30 April 2013, 71 countries have responded and provided information on 299 classifications.

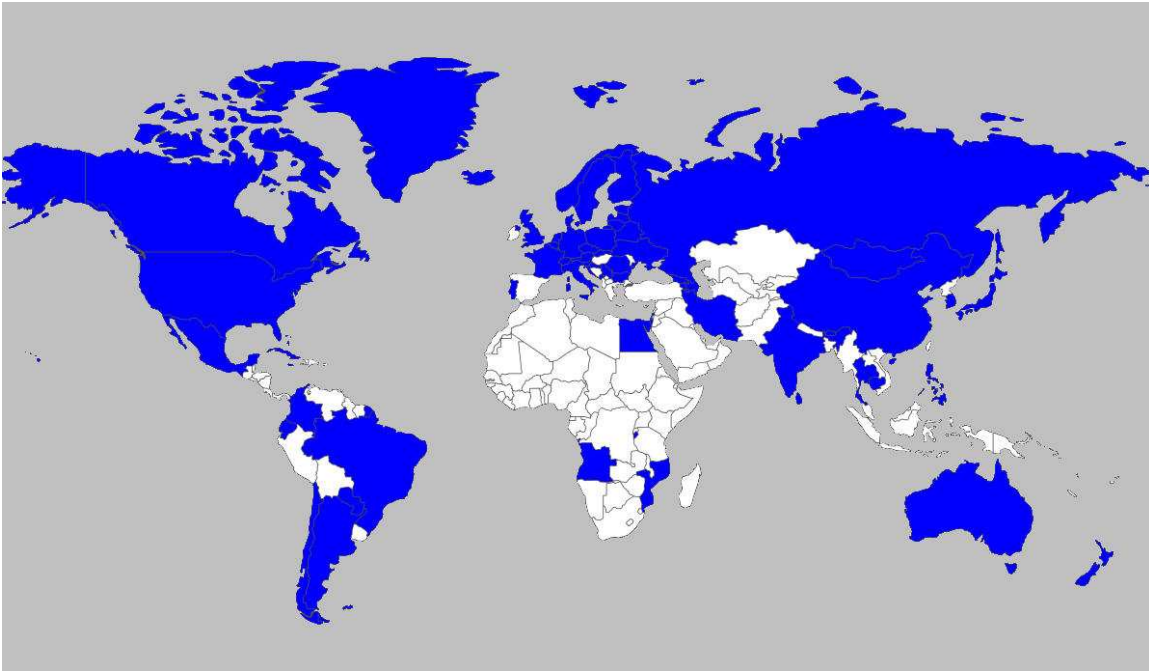
The breakdown by type of classification is as follows<sup>1</sup>:

	<b>Countries</b>	<b>Classifications</b>
Activity classifications	67	73
Product classifications	51	94
Expenditure classifications	35	55
Occupation classifications	49	55
Other classifications	13	22

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<sup>1</sup> Some countries provided information on more than one classification per category, for example on multiple product classifications in use for production, trade etc.

The geographical distribution of the responses is shown below.



### **3. Implementation status of ISIC and CPC**

One particular type of information that can be drawn from the survey responses, is the relationship of the national classification described to the international standard classification. A number of questions related to this issue. While a detailed assessment of the relationship might require a study of the full structure and would go beyond the practical limitations of this survey, the answers provided by the respective countries usually allow a clear characterization of the classification as being identical to the international standard, being extensions of the international standard, being truncations of the international standard or being related in other ways.

Based on the answers provided for each of the relevant classifications, it is possible to derive the following assessments for ISIC and CPC:

## ***International Standard Industrial Classification of All Economic Activities (ISIC)***

Relationship of national classifications to different versions of ISIC:

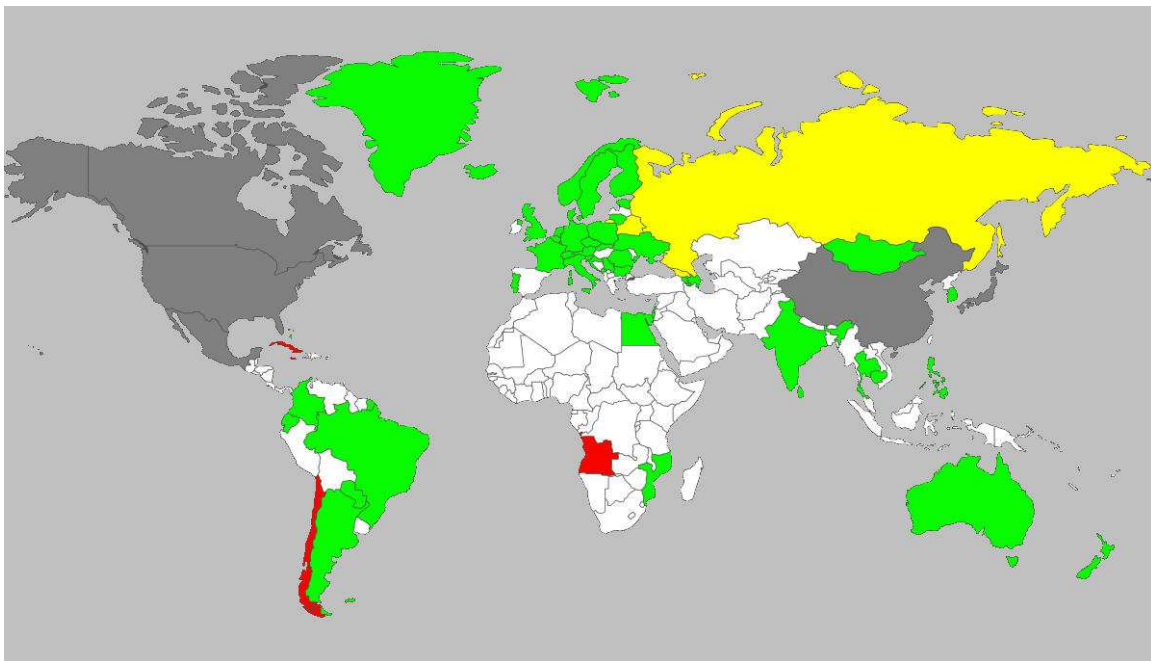
	<b>Identical</b>	<b>Using additional detail</b>	<b>Using less detail</b>	<b>Other relationship</b>
ISIC Rev.3	-	4	-	1
ISIC Rev.3.1	-	3	-	1
<i>Of which: NACE Rev.1.1</i>	-	3	-	-
ISIC Rev.4	7	44	2	3
<i>Of which: NACE Rev.2</i>	5	25	-	-

In addition, 4 classifications were listed that are not based on ISIC, but allow for detailed links (such as NAICS).

3 other activity classifications used different concepts, but were used in addition to the standard classifications already accounted for.

Overall, the majority of reporting countries (81 per cent) had moved to an ISIC 4-based classification, with some of the others reporting that they were planning to move there soon.

The following map shows the geographical distribution of these countries.



The colors indicate:

- Green Country uses ISIC Rev.4-based classification (latest version)
- Yellow Country uses ISIC Rev.3.1-based classification
- Red Country uses ISIC Rev.3-based classification
- Grey Country uses classification not based on ISIC

## ***Central Product Classification (CPC)***

Relationship of national classifications to different versions of CPC:

	<b>Identical</b>	<b>Using additional detail</b>	<b>Using less detail</b>	<b>Other relationship</b>
CPC Ver.1	1	2	-	1
<i>Of which: CPA 1996</i>	<i>1</i>	-	-	-
CPC Ver.1.1	1	3	-	-
<i>Of which: CPA 2002</i>	-	2	-	-
CPC Ver.2	15	11	2	-
<i>Of which: CPA 2008</i>	<i>14</i>	5	-	-

In addition 57 classifications were reported that are based on other international standards, such as the Harmonized System, the Standard International Trade Classification, were specific to a small area or were based on Prodcod while a CPA-based classification was already reported for the country. Since the compliance with HS or other classifications was not the primary purpose of this study, no detailed analysis of these classifications was done.

The results show that the majority of reporting countries has moved to classifications that are compatible with the latest standards. Unlike in the case of activity classifications, the European classification (CPA) is not fully consistent with the international version since it uses a different aggregation structure. However, since the product detail is mostly compatible with the CPC, reporting in international standard classification is usually supported.

### **4. Future steps**

To obtain a more complete overview of the current implementation status of ISIC and CPC, additional efforts will be undertaken to follow up with non-responding countries. As in the past, UNSD will use its regional classification workshops as a vehicle to reach more countries. In addition, actions by the Regional Commissions may also help in reaching more countries and thus completing the current assessment. In particular, efforts should be made to get more complete information from Central American countries and African countries.

To monitor the general use of national classifications and their relation to international standards, the survey should be repeated in regular intervals, such as every 5 years.

A complete overview of the implementation status would also help in focusing technical assistance activities for the implementation of ISIC and CPC.



**United Nations Statistics Division**

**Questionnaire on national classifications**

Please provide information for each classification used on a separate copy of this questionnaire.

The information provided in this questionnaire will be used for assessment purposes of classifications, as well as for general information on the “national classifications” section of the UN Statistics Division’s classifications website. Answers to questions 7(c) and 8(a)-8(c) are for internal UN use only to allow us to better assist countries in their implementation and adaptation of international classifications.

Completed questionnaires should be returned to the UN Statistics Division at [CHL@un.org](mailto:CHL@un.org).

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**Country:**

**Date:**

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**General information**

1 (a) Name of the current national classification (full name in official national languages and in English with acronyms in brackets, should be given)

1 (b) In which language(s) is the classification available?

1 (c) Can the classification (or information about it) be accessed on the Internet? If yes, please provide the URL.

**Classification structure**

2 (a) Please describe the structure of the classification: How many levels does the classification have? (Please provide labels, such as “Division”, “Class”) How many categories exist at each level?

2 (b) Please provide examples of the coding system used at each level.

### **Relationship to international standards**

3 (a) Is this classification based on (or linked to) an international standard classification? If yes, please describe.

3 (b) Is the classification structure identical to the international standard or, if not, how does it differ? (e.g. have additional levels been added to the international standard or have changes been made within the level of the international structure, such as aggregations or additional breakdowns)

3 (c) Please describe deviations from the international standard (in terms of structure, methodology or application rules). Please use examples, if a general statement is not possible.

3 (d) At what level of the international standard can data be reported for international comparison? (Please provide examples of programmes / indicators if reporting takes place at different levels of the classification.)

3 (e) If no links to international classifications exist or no international standard is used, please state if there are plans to use international norms in the future.

### **Classification uses**

4 (a) Please state for which **statistical purposes** (surveys etc.) this classification is used and if there are users outside of the Statistical Office. Please indicate at which level the classification is used for data **collection** and for data **publishing**.

4 (b) Please give the names of institutions that use the classification for **non-statistical purposes** (as opposed to statistical purposes in question 4(a)). Also indicate the kind of use (e.g. tax offices, social security, customs, enterprise register, employment services, work permits etc.)

4 (c) Please indicate if **alternative classifications** are used by other institutions of the economy. Are these classifications available and useful for the Statistical Office?

### **Implementation / revision status**

5 (a) Please state the date of the official adoption of the classification. If not yet adopted, please indicate the current state (e.g. in development, sent for approval, in printing, ready to be distributed etc.)

- 5 (b) Please state the date of use of the classification for individual statistical programmes.
- 5 (c) Are there existing plans for revision or update of the current classification?
- 5 (d) Name of former (previous) national classification (full name in both national tongue and in English with acronyms in brackets, should be given)
- 5 (e) Please describe the link of the former classification to international classifications
- 5 (f) Please describe the structure of the former classification and indicate the number of items at each level of the classification. (similar to question 2(a))
- 5 (g) Do conversion tables exist between the former and current classification?
- 5 (h) When was the former classification implemented?
- 5 (i) Are statistical data still collected or published according to the former classification? Please indicate if this statistical data is collected or published by the Statistical Office or elsewhere.

### **Supporting documents**

- 6 (a) Have national explanatory notes and/or guidelines been elaborated?
- 6 (b) Do correspondence tables exist between the national and the international classifications (if applicable)?
- 6 (c) Are correspondence tables between alternative and current classification available (if applicable)?
- 6 (d) Does a national coding index exist?
- 6 (e) Is the classification available in electronic form? If yes, in which formats is it available?(e.g. PDF, TXT, Excel, XML)
- 6 (f) Are the correspondence tables or indexes available in electronic form?



### **Contact information**

7 (a) Name of institution / office responsible for the development and maintenance of the classification

7 (b) Contact address, phone number, e-mail or website for **public information** and inquiry (this info may be posted on UNSD's website)

7 (c) Name and contact information (telephone, e-mail) of the person responsible for the daily management (**for UN use only**)

### **Capacity building**

**(Information in this section will not be made public and is for UNSD purposes only)**

8 (a) Did problems occur in the use of the current classification? Please describe the kind of problems that have occurred (interpretation, methodology, etc.)

8 (b) Please indicate if assistance from international organizations could be useful and the kind of assistance needed.

8 (c) International classifications regularly undergo review processes to determine if revisions or updates are needed. Do you have any suggestions for the relevant international classifications in this case that should be considered in future reviews? What changes would you like to see? Do you know of specific problems that should be addressed?

### **Other comments**

9 (a) Please provide any other information on this classification that you consider relevant